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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/627,313	07/24/2003	Philip E. Eggers	A-3-4	1924

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EXAMINER	
STIGELL, THEODORE J	

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3763	

DATE MAILED: 01/11/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

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Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/627,313	EGGERS ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Theodore J. Stigell	3763	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *03 November 2005*.

2a)☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☐ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *54-70* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *54-70* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham* **v.** *John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claims 54-56, 59-70 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bales et al. (4,682,596) in view of Doss et al. (4,326,529). See Figure 3 and the respective portions of the specification. Bales et al. teach a surgical instrument for applying high-frequency electrical energy to tissue at a target site comprising a shaft (84), a hemispherical-shaped electrode terminal (86), an annular return electrode (90) spaced proximally from the hemispherical-shaped electrode, a connector (94,92) extending from the electrode terminal to the proximal end of the shaft and a non-electrically conducting electrode support (88) that can be made of either ceramic or glass (See Column 7, lines 10-16). Bales et al. also disclose a voltage supply configured to supply voltage to the electrode terminals.

Bales et al. do not disclose the surface area of the tissue treatment surface. However, these parameters are deemed matters of design choice, well within the skill of the ordinary artisan, obtained through routine experimentation in determining optimum results.

Bales et al. also does not disclose to include an electrically conductive fluid supply to deliver electrically conductive fluid in the vicinity of the electrode terminal wherein the electrical conductivity is at least 0.2 mS/cm.

Doss et al. disclose a corneal shaping electrode with a hemispherical electrode that delivers saline solution to the cornea of the eye. Doss et al. teach to use electrically conductive isotonic saline in the device to help provide electrical conduction to the desired tissue. See column 3, lines 10-68. Doss et al. do not specifically state to use an electrical conductivity of 0.2 mS/cm but this parameter is deemed a matter of

design choice because the Applicant has not stated in the instant specification that this particular conductivity works better than other electrical conductivity.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to use an electrically conductive fluid supply like isotonic saline, as disclosed by Doss et al., with the surgical instrument, as disclosed by Bales et al., to make a surgical device that can better provide electrical conduction to the desired tissue.

Claims 57-58 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bales et al. (4,682,596) in view of Herczog et al. (GB 2037167).

Bales et al. teach all of the limitations of the claims except for explicitly reciting that the shaft has a bent configuration. Herczog et al. teach a bent configuration in the distal portion of the shaft. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time of invention, to modify the shaft of Bales et al. with the bent configuration taught by Herczog et al. for the well known purpose of providing for a transverse treatment location for structures parallel to the device.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 54-70 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP

§ 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Theodore J. Stigell whose telephone number is 571-272-8759. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nicholas Lucchesi can be reached on 571-272-4977. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Theodore J. Stigell

Theodore J. Stigell

NICHOLAS D. LUCCHESI
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
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